



Promoting Youth Civic Engagement

Quarterly Report, April to June 2013
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Cover Photo: In Juba, Marib, a Steering Committee Member and Peer Network Member repair holes in the main highway, where dozens of people had been injured and died in traffic accidents over the last few years.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

America-Mideast Educational and Training Services	AMIDEAST
Community Engagement Workshop	CE Workshop
Community Grant	CG
Ministry of Education	MoE
Ministry of Endowments and Guidance	MoEG
Ministry of Youth and Sports	MoYS
Monitoring and Evaluation	M&E
National Organization for the Development of Society	NODS
Participatory Analysis for Community Action	PACA
Peace Players International	PPI
Peer Network	PN
Promoting Youth Civic Engagement	PYCE
Sports and Activity Coordinator	SAC
Steering Committee	SC
Training of Trainers	TOT
United States Agency for International Development	USAID

Promoting Youth Civic Engagement (PYCE)

The PYCE project is designed to support USAID's objective of increasing Yemen's stability through targeted interventions in vulnerable areas by (1) improving community-based institutions and mechanisms to ensure active participation in governance and locally driven solutions strengthened; and (2) improving access to and the delivery of quality services. To support this USAID objective, the PYCE project objectives have sought: to strengthen the role of moderate religious actors in positively influencing Yemeni youth, and to establish and support youth sports and recreational programs. In response to changes in Yemen's political and socio-economic context, which has been influenced recently by the Arab Spring, the Yemeni Revolution, a new Transitional Government and an ongoing process of national reconciliation and priority-setting known as the National Dialogue, the language of these objectives has been enhanced.

These objectives have been expanded to foster a more diverse set of program components that can accomplish the overarching objectives of USAID in a new Yemen. The enhanced objectives are: 1) Strengthen and increase interaction between youth and influential community actors, including moderate religious actors; and 2) Empower youth to positively affect their local communities through sports, recreational programs, and other community-based engagement activities.

AMIDEAST and its partners Peace Players International (PPI) and the National Organization for the Development of Society (NODS), in cooperation with the Ministries of Youth and Sports (MoYS), Endowments and Guidance (MoEG) and Education (MoE), have adopted a technical approach that will support strengthening youth participation in their communities and in the process of governance. The approach is centered upon civic engagement, which is the collection of actions of individuals to improve quality of life in their communities. The foundations of civic engagement are volunteerism and a sense of responsibility towards one's community, and these are the values that PYCE seeks to enhance in Yemeni youth. It is only when these concepts are embraced and practiced can youth advance to become active citizens.

The PYCE strategy continuously incorporates the following elements.

1. Reaching out to youth through community and moderate religious actors who volunteer on steering committees
2. Preparing youth for their role as volunteers and in community assessment to identify the resources for locally driven solutions
3. Organizing youth under the guidance of the steering committees into peer networks
4. Providing training of facilitators to moderate-risk youth leaders to reach out to peers and to at-risk groups
5. Supporting community grants by peer network youth working with local officials as recommended by the steering committees
6. Ensuring availability of resources and services at youth center that serve as the spaces from which youth can operate
7. Securing proper facilities and renovations with community support to sustain youth activities
8. Preparing youth coaches to engage with their communities and increase volunteerism
9. Sports promoting community service
10. Raising awareness of community contributions, to promote stabilization-to-sustainability transition, through various media channels and with stakeholders.

Through the frameworks of consensus building, leadership and development, gender equity and building capacity, PYCE has successfully incorporated these elements into its programming and as of the date of this report, exceeded nearly all project targets.

Consensus Building

PYCE held meetings with community actors including moderate religious actors, sports enthusiasts, athletic directors, ministry officials, Steering Committee members and project beneficiaries. These stakeholders included representatives from Sana'a, Aden, Marib and Lahj and provided a platform where trust relationships could be developed and project objectives and achievements could be highlighted. These meetings were centered on critical dialogue, as project stakeholders explored ideas for new activities, identified best practices and built the consensus needed to implement and sustain effective programs. One-hundred thirty community actors have been engaged this quarter and 1,022 overall. This number represents more than triple the project target of 250 and indicates a high level of outreach and community buy-in. Moreover, the meetings have been internalized by Steering Committee members and Peer Network members, who have continued the cycle of inclusion and consensus building by holding informal discussions and working collaboratively to implement activities at youth centers.

Steering Committee meetings have been likewise centered on collaboration and critical dialogue. The Steering Committee is an integral part of the PYCE project, as each Steering Committee helps guide PN members and their activities. A Steering Committee (SC) is a team of between 10 to 20 community actors, including but not limited to moderate religious actors, sports enthusiasts, educators, governorate or ministry officials, and other active community members who meet regularly for the purpose of providing guidance and resources to the PYCE project and its Peer Network. They are contacted because they serve as current administrators at MoYS clubs



or MoE schools in PYCE-supported districts or have been recommended as involved community actors in PYCE districts by other SC members, ministerial stakeholders, PYCE staff, Peer Network members, or USAID.

Figure 1: Steering Committee members and Peer Network members from Aden and Lahj participate in informal meetings on external courts powered by a new solar system at Al Intalak Club in Lahj.

Steering Committee members are selected in part, because of their interest in the PYCE project, positive attitude, willingness to attend SC meetings monthly, commitment to mentoring youth and openness to working with a diverse team of other community actors.

Their service centers upon the following:

- 1) *Interviewing* applicants for Peer Network membership
- 2) *Interviewing* Peer Network members for the Training-of-Trainers and Peer Facilitators Program
- 3) *Advising* the Peer Network on activities and Summer Connections
- 4) *Evaluating* community grant applications
- 5) *Mentoring* Peer Network Activity Council (PNAC) members
- 6) *Conducting* observations and site visits of PYCE-supported activities
- 7) *Promoting* PYCE activities with stakeholders and their community networks to facilitate community buy-in.

There were 12 Steering Committee meetings this quarter and 51 overall. This total represents nearly double the project target of 25. As tireless volunteers, SC Members valued the impact of civic engagement in their communities, more than any monetary reward for service. Indeed, SC members have been keen to perform the aforementioned tasks and have begun attending Peer Network activities as much more than mentors and advisers. To help determine the impact of PYCE-sponsored activities and document the progress of individual Peer Network members over time, the SC has participated in monitoring and evaluation. With training from and along with PYCE staff, they collect and compile data which is analyzed for internal and external reporting.

SC members are also dedicated to sustainability. They have conducted outreach to businessmen and women and other community actors, who may be able to provide resources and build relationships with PYCE beneficiaries. As a result of their efforts, youth centers will have both the leadership and support needed to continue addressing the needs of at-risk youth.



PYCE participants are also enthusiastic about civic engagement and the process of developing locally-driven solutions to challenges in their neighborhoods. They have begun to re-imagine their neighborhoods based upon its strengths and co-construct the methods by which these challenges will be addressed.

Figure 2: A Peer Network member is awarded for outstanding achievements at a gathering of stakeholders in Aden

As a result of these meetings, plans for PYCE community grants, awareness

sessions and recreational activities have been developed and later presented to SC members and PYCE. Participants were encouraged because they understood that the shared visions cultivated from these meetings were, in fact, building blocks of community development and recovery.

Participants have held 23 meetings in PYCE-supported youth centers this quarter and 39 overall. Through the efforts and enthusiasm of participants, the target of 27 has been exceeded.

Leadership and Development

PYCE has held training for at-risk youth in community appraisal, peer facilitation and activity coordination. These training platforms, combined with experiential opportunities, have supported their development into role models and youth leaders. The Community Engagement, Training-of-Trainers and Sports and Activity Coordinator workshops, served as the formal mechanisms for youth training and were also key modalities of outreach, as program beneficiaries utilized newly-acquired skills to conduct training for other at-risk youth. Moreover, training sessions were often paired with community-service activities, which allowed youth to both enhance skills and become servant leaders who continue the cycle of outreach.

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement (CE) Workshop is a 20-hour youth-centric learning opportunity that occurs over a five-day period. The objectives of this workshop are to introduce PYCE to aspiring Peer Network members, as well as other community actors and provide instruction and hands-on activities that will foster the development of skills in community appraisal, program planning and implementation, presentation, civic engagement and photography.

In addition to the CE Workshop, participants who aspire to join the Peer Network perform Participatory Analysis for Community Action (PACA) in their communities to assess youth needs and interests. This needs assessment serves as the basis of project concepts that Peer Network applicants submit to PYCE. Four concepts are selected for development, and Peer Network applicants are placed in cohorts in accordance with their common interests and neighborhood. These cohorts plan four micro-graduation projects, based upon the project concept and upon approval from the appropriate local officials. PACA teamwork projects provide youth with an experiential opportunity to practice connecting needs to action, while working in teams and using project-planning skills acquired in the project workshop. This pre-service platform, thereby shapes youth to cultivate the skills they will need for longer-term service to their communities. Once the CE workshop and PACA are completed, youth can apply for membership into the Peer Network.

Youth teams accomplished 8 PACA activities this quarter and 99 overall. This number far surpasses the project target of 50 and has involved more than 30 youth clubs and K-12 schools.

The centerpiece of the PYCE project is the Peer Network. The PYCE Peer Network (PN) is an all-volunteer group of youth from PYCE governorates who organize activities to involve other local youth in healthy volunteer, sports, recreational, or cultural activities. PN members are

recruited based, in part, upon their willingness to work in diverse teams and enhance the positive aspects of their communities. PN members are usually between 18 and 32 years old and serve as role models to area youth and catalysts in community development. They are dedicated to: re-imagining their neighborhoods, developing visions of communities which are connected and vibrant and combining PYCE supportive mechanisms to cultivate more transparent, efficient and sustainable programs and services.

PN members serve their communities through training, coaching and facilitating discussions with other peers in PYCE-supported programs and planning social and cultural activities with Steering Committee members, who represent a wide-range of community actors including moderate religious actors. They also serve through planning and implementing PYCE-supported community grants and participating in the Peer Network Activities Council (PNAC), which both support and are mentored by youth center administrators and other Steering Committee members. The majority of these activities take place at PYCE-supported youth centers in Sana'a, Aden, Marib and Lahej, which include clubs, schools, parks, universities, and their affiliated spaces.

Training-of-Trainers

The Training-of-Trainers (TOT) Program is implemented with the National Organization for the Development of Society (NODS), a PYCE sub partner. The PYCE TOT is an approximately 12-day training course designed to prepare youth to serve as facilitators for peer education and other activities. The training materials are reviewed by the MoEG and will be made available to the ministry for its institutes of guidance.

The TOT serves to advance skills in facilitation, participatory and reflective training, community needs assessment, competency-based techniques and the evaluation of participant learning. PN members are expected to utilize the TOT Program to activate other youth by identifying topics informed by their own community appraisals or assessments that are relevant to the needs of their peers and organizing a workshop to serve as a platform where youth discuss and/or address these topics. They are encouraged to practice learner-centered techniques, prepare a report with detailed self-assessments and reflect upon their capacity to promote positive behaviors, including civic engagement among youth.

TOT candidates are selected in part based upon their previous involvement in PYCE and membership in the Peer Network. TOT candidates are interviewed with a standardized guide to establish their aptitude to identify creative programs and activities, suggest resources that could facilitate implementation, and link his or her program ideas to needs in the community. To be trainers for PYCE, candidates must be recommended by NODS staff upon completion of the TOT Program and evaluated in an interview conducted by Steering Committee members and/or subcommittee members.

The PYCE TOT Program cultivates activities organized by and for youth, depends upon youth awareness of their communities, and enhances the skills of both Peer Network trainers and youth participants - key PYCE project outputs. All workshops are provided to youth without charge and are often scheduled before or after school to discourage delinquency and offer an opportunity to become positively engaged. As a result, youth have a vehicle with which they can

become involved in the processes that serve to strengthen access to and delivery of services—a key USAID objective.

In this quarter, 52 Peer Network members completed the TOT program, which elevates the total number of TOT graduates to 92. Indeed, nearly double the project target of 48 has been achieved.

Sports and Activity Coordinator Program

The Sports and Activity Coordinator Program is implemented with Peace Players International (PPI) a PYCE sub partner. The SAC Program is centered upon the sports-for-development model, which utilizes physical activity, competition through sports and play, to achieve development goals.

PPI conducted workshops and clinics for PN members, aspiring activity coordinators and youth volunteers, in three- to four-day training sessions. The workshops offered indoor sessions to instruct students in methods of coaching, teaching, facilitation and the strategies for positive behavior change. Outdoor sessions were focused upon teamwork, organized play and developing successful teams. The purpose of the training was to prepare youth to plan and implement their own sports and recreational programs and utilize these programs to promote positive behaviors such as volunteerism in their communities and other forms of civic engagement.

Peer Network members were selected for the SAC Program in part based upon their commitment to community-service, willingness to utilize recreational activities to promote life skills, and capacity to role model positive behaviors to at-risk youth. With PYCE training from the Community Engagement Workshop and Sports and Activity Coordinator Program, PN members are prepared to identify, plan and organize activities for small groups of individuals and teams. They are also poised to establish guidelines and reward systems where teams are recognized more for their service to the community than they are for winning competitions and individuals are regarded more for their capacity to work well with others than their physical ability on the field.

Figure 3: Youth enjoy basketball at the pilot Summer Connections in Marib



There were no participants in the SAC Program from April to June 2013, yet, in previous quarters, PYCE trained 107 participants. This total represents more than double the project target of 50.

In June and July 2013, PN Members, including TOT and SAC graduates, planned and implemented activities for the pilot Summer Connections Program and coordinated

educational competitions which are ongoing. The pilot Summer Connections Program included more than 600 participants and was a major milestone in the PYCE Program, as the desire of PN members to positively affect their communities, was matched only by the nascent joy of youth whose dreams of positive outlets were now answered. Moreover, the competitions addressed a significant, yet understated need in Yemen for recreational activities which are not sports-centered. By including a focus on education, PN members are providing opportunities for youth who may not excel at sports or have limitations or health conditions which mitigate against physical activity. In addition, the activities are indoors and require limited equipment, thereby serving as a viable and sustainable alternative for youth. Three-hundred twenty-three participants were trained by PN members this quarter. This number was achieved in 1 month, after PN members graduated from TOT and SAC training programs. Seven-hundred and twenty-four participants have been trained overall, which represents more than fifty percent of the project target of 1,350. The PN is also coordinating teams to play volleyball, basketball and soccer. Fifty teams have been organized overall, which more than triples the project target of 16. While new teams were not organized this quarter, they were organized and began operating in July 2013.

Gender Equity

The PYCE strategy considers gender inclusion in all PYCE activities. The five elements to the PYCE gender strategy:

- Seeks substantial representation on the Steering Committee and Peer Network;
- Advocates for female-only spaces for sports and recreational activities;
- Provides female monitors and staff members to conduct surveys and collect data;
- Ensures women-only spaces such as prayer and break spaces for females; and
- Gathers permission to utilize pictures and may limit picture-taking to non-physical activities to respect participants' needs for modesty.



PYCE understands that there are few public centers available, which offer recreational and educational activities for Yemeni women and girls. PYCE has worked closely with youth center management to arrange for female-only schedules at Al Mena Club in Aden, which recently began incorporating activities for women for the first time.

Figure 4: Participants have fun with basketballs at

PYCE supported renovations and community grants to increase services for females at 14 October Secondary School in Aden and 22 May Club in Sana'a. Though the lack of equity for women in public institutions has left female children with fewer female adult role models, PYCE has advocated for female programming in stakeholder gatherings and is currently reviewing plans for gender inclusion from PNAC members. Indeed PYCE has sought to achieve greater female representation in all activities. Females represent at least 40% all Peer Network members, PNAC members, TOT and SAC graduates and youth participants trained by the Peer Network. PYCE is steadily increasing the number of women who are 22% of SC members.

Building Capacity

PYCE has cooperated with community-based institutions such as K-12 schools, youth clubs, universities, parks and their affiliated spaces, to improve the access to and quality of public services. These institutions, or youth centers, have served as the milieu where youth and community actors develop the trust relationships, which propel critical ideas into concrete plans for development. PYCE has received these plans and provided support to youth centers in the form of renovations, community grants and safety awareness programs, which have benefited thousands of youth and community members in 4 governorates.

Renovations

Renovations refers to upgrades, structural enhancements, installations and equipment, which increases the capacity of youth centers to address the needs of the community, particularly at-risk youth. Natural resource conservation and sustainable development has been promoted through PYCE-supported renovations, including the installation of solar and hybrid solar systems at 5 youth centers and a rainwater harvesting and irrigation program. These renovations in particular, are leveraged in order to promote awareness and gender inclusion. Moreover, solar-powered lights allow basketball and multi-purpose courts to be utilized in the evening, where frequent power outages inhibit recreational activities and compromise the safety of child-friendly spaces.

PYCE is working with vendors to develop additional and cost-effective methods of resource conservation for small spaces. Currently, a "green smart corner" for evaporative cooling is being considered for community grants in K-12 schools. The smart corner consists of a fish tank comprised of pottery, which is powered by a micro-solar unit. The unit generates enough power for 1 TV, 1 Satellite Receiver, 1 ADSL modem and 1 light, which could assist K-12 school maintain spaces in computer labs and meeting rooms where youth centers conduct awareness sessions and educational competitions. The water from the tank has the capacity to nourish both the fish and a small garden, which enhances the aesthetic value of youth clubs and schools and could support science and technology education. The system costs about \$400 per unit and could be available for piloting in the fall of 2013. PYCE has renovated 1 youth center this quarter and 11 overall.

Community Grants

Community Grants are PYCE financial support of Peer Network members' proposals for community-based interventions. Community grants are centered upon needs assessments and appraisals that inform and enhance PN members' understanding of the most useful ways to positively impact the community. Needs assessments also promote community buy-in, as community members view the Peer Network as responsive to their needs and ideas. Results from the assessment are discussed among PN member teams, who then construct a larger project proposal that aligns the need with one or more potential activities. The proposal is vetted by the Steering Committee and forwarded to PYCE for approval. PYCE generally provides financial support up to 3,500 USD to each PN team. Community Grants are implemented on a volunteer basis by PN members, under the guidance of the Steering Committee and with the approval of the appropriate youth center staff, local official or ministry.

Community grants are much more than the concrete activities documented in each application. Through informal conversations, PN members encouraged at-risk students to remain in school and supported the inclusion of girls in sports and competition. Their dedication inspires students, who may not feel connected to or oriented toward positive alternatives, to delinquent behavior.

Through cooperation with the MoE, PYCE and PN members have implemented 10 community grants this quarter. Twenty-two community grants have been implemented overall, exceeding the project target of 18. Many of these projects have been implemented consecutively, allowing PN members to revisit the same youth centers multiple times and form strong connections with students, school staff and youth club members. PN members have labored with their own hands, to transform youth centers in disrepair into centers of discovery and inclusion. They also donated supplies and trained students, to sustain efforts and increase capacity.

Safety Awareness



maintain solar systems at the pilot Summer Connection in Aden

To prevent injuries and reduce loss of equipment, PYCE has conducted site visits, installed fire extinguishers at 10 youth centers and held training for youth center staff, Peer Network members and Steering Committee members. Site Visits were also conducted by Steering Committee members and Peer Network members.

Figure 5: Learning how to clean and

Based upon recommendations from USAID, PYCE installed powder-based fire extinguishers in 10 youth clubs and schools in June 2013. These powder-based extinguishers join the existing CO2 fire extinguishers PYCE installed in May 2013, for a total of 3 fire extinguishers in each site and/or solar battery area. The installation of fire extinguishers sets a new standard for safety, whereas the majority of youth centers did not have fire extinguishers or other safety precautions. Moreover, PNAC and PN members received training on the proper utilization of fire extinguishers and the maintenance of solar batteries and panels.

In conjunction with PYCE staff and the SC, the PNAC will take a leadership role and continue regular site visits of PYCE-supported youth centers. The PNAC will observe, document and confirm safety standards and guidelines for environmental compliance are met. These site visits perform a vital service, as limited resources and instability have inhibited the adoption of safety measures.

A Peer Network Activity Council (PNAC) is a team of up to 4 Peer Network members who are chosen by the PN membership to have oversight of the programs and activities implemented at youth centers. PNAC members work collaboratively to identify the activities that can be most useful to youth, particularly at-risk youth, and fulfill the necessary logistical, planning and administrative duties in order to conduct these activities at PYCE-supported youth centers. These include but are not limited to: submitting proposals to and working alongside Steering Committee members, reserving rooms with youth center administration and conducting outreach to promote activities through various communication channels. At the end of each activity, PNAC members submit materials that can include participant attendance lists, videos and pictures, success stories, program descriptions and observations. While the impact of each activity will vary, the PNAC serves to increase the resources available at youth centers, which guarantees youth have positive alternatives to negative behaviors and otherwise rare opportunities for self-development.

The PNAC will continue to organize activities, including the cleaning and maintenance of youth centers and solar systems and contact media outlets to publicize their events. Currently, there are Peer Network Activity Council members at 9 youth centers. Youth centers in Aden include Al Rawdha Club, 14 October School, Al Gelah Club, Al Mena Club and Shamsan Club. Youth centers in Sana'a include Al Dhurafi Club, 22 May Sports Club and Bilquis Club for Women. Youth centers in Lahej include Al Intalak Club. PNAC and PN Members have disseminated information about their activities this quarter, through 5 communication channels. They have utilized twenty-five communication channels overall, which represents nearly a third of the project target of 90. PYCE anticipates this number will increase dramatically, with the organization of teams and subsequent tournaments in July 2013 and the educational and recreational activities planned through November 2013.

PYCE activities are inclusive, relational and sustainable. Through consensus building, leadership and development, gender equity and building capacity, nearly all project targets have been achieved and stakeholders in 4 governorates are enthusiastic about civic engagement, as they work cooperatively to help their communities thrive.